

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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TAGS: PBOR, ELAB, PN, PQ
SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS - LOCAL COVERAGE

SUMMARY: MEDIA COVERAGE OVER WEEKEND WAS SOMEWHAT MORE EXTENSIVE THAN HAS BEEN CUSTOMARY, CENTERING ON FORTHCOMING ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND ON PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN UNIONS' CONTINUING CONCERN ON EMPLOYEE QUESTION. HOWEVER, THERE WAS LITTLE COMMENT OF PARTICULAR NOTE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOCAL POINT OF MEDIA COVERAGE OVER WEEKEND WAS REPORTAGE FROM WASHINGTON ON FORTHCOMING DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. A REPORT BY TV CHANNEL 2 NEWS DIRECTOR MARIO VELASQUEZ ON JUNE 24 (FBIS/PANAMA PA 250357Y) AND AN ARTICLE BY LUIS NOLI (FBIS/PANAMA PA 251612Y) FEATURED IN JUNE 25 "ESTRELLA" AND "STAR AND HERALD" REPORTED ON BARLETTA'S FRIDAY PRESENTATION, AND CALLED PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO NUMBER AND LEVEL OF U.S. ECONOMIC PARTICIPANTS IN SESSION SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 28.

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2. "CRITICA" EDITORIALIZED ON THIS SUBJECT JUNE 27, STRESSING HISTORICAL DISPROPORTION IN ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO PANAMA, AND NOTING THAT NONPAYMENT BY U.S. FOR BASE RIGHTS IS ATYPICAL TODAY. HIGH LEVEL U.S. ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AT THIS STAGE WAS STRESSED. HOWEVER, THIS MUST NOT RESULT IN POINTS RELATING TO NATIONAL DIGNITY BEING "AUCTIONED OFF".

3. OTHER PRINCIPAL ITEM OF MEDIA COVERAGE WAS CONTINUING AGITATION BY CANAL ZONE LOCALS OF AFSCME. IN FRIDAY'S AFTERNOON "REPUBLICA" (ENGLISH SECTION) AND SATURDAY'S "STAR AND HERALD" LEADERS OF THE LOCALS PRAISE TORRIJOS' DESIGNATION OF THEM AS LABOR ADVISERS TO PANAMANIAN TREATY NEGOTIATORS (PANAMA 4560) AS FURTHER PROOF THAT HE HAD "KEPT HIS WORD" TO PROTECT PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN LABOR INTERESTS.

4. SUNDAY'S "STAR AND HERALD" CARRIED A JOINT REPORT BY LOCALS 900 AND 907 ON THEIR LEADERS' CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON RECENTLY (FULL TEXT FBIS/PANAMA PA 261455Y). THIS HAS BEEN REPRINTED, USUALLY WITH LESS THAN FRONT-PAGE EMPHASIS, IN MOST OTHER PAPERS FOR WEEKEND OR MONDAY. SUNDAY "ESTRELLA" ALSO CARRIED A SPANISH REPEAT OF LAST WEEK'S "STAR AND HERALD" ARTICLE ON JERRY WURF'S LETTER TO GEORGE MEANY ON LABOR ASPECTS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

5. FINALLY, "REPUBLICA", ON FRIDAY (ENGLISH SECTION) AND "STAR AND HERALD" ON SUNDAY BOTH CARRIED WEEKLY COLUMN BY AFSCME REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM SINCLAIR WHICH BLASTED DESIGNATION OF ALFRED GRAHAM AS LABOR ADVISER TO US TREATY NEGOTIATORS AS "A LOW BLOW CONSPIRACY" TO EXCLUDE PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN UNIONS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINCLAIR DISCLAIMED MISREPRESENTATION BY "...SPOKESMEN' WE HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN, BASED ON THEIR LABOR RECORD BOTH IN THE CANAL ZONE AND WASHINGTON...". HE CONCLUDES THAT: "...US NEGOTIATORS SEEM PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE GENERAL WELFARE OF US CITIZEN EMPLOYEES IN THE CANAL ZONE, WHILE THE PANAMA NEGOTIATING TEAM HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE NON-US CITIZEN WORKFORCE. WHETHER THIS IS RIGHT OR WRONG, JUST OR UNJUST, IS NOT THE POINT NOW BEFORE US, WHAT IS UNFOLDING ON THE CANAL ZONE LABOR SCENE IS THAT EACH SIDE IS JUGGLING TO PUT OVER ITS RESPECTIVE VIEWS..." (FULL TEXT FBIS/PANAMA PA 261513Y).

6. ASIDE FROM MONDAY'S "CRITICA" EDITORIAL, COMMENTARY ON THE NEGOTIATIONS HAS REMAINED SCANT. ONLY ITEM OF NOTE WAS A SATURDAY COLUMN IN WHICH ACTING DEAN OF UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL AND "CRITICA" COLUMNIST CAMILO PEREZ SAID THE GOP COULD NOT EXPECT TO AVOID POPULAR (READ "STUDENT") OPPOSITION TO ANY TREATY WHICH "LEGALIZED" A U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE BY HOLDING A PLEBISCITE DURING THE NEXT SCHOOL VACATION (I.E., JANUARY-MARCH 1978), AND THAT IT HAD BETTER NOT TRY.

GONZALEZ

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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